(a) whether Government have taken any steps to reduce forest depletion due to use of firewood or other traditional wood waste systems;

(b) whether Government have identified wasteful practices in the country which lead to forest depletion;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether any step will be taken to afforest large area of the degraded area in the country; and

(e) if so, the details of such forestation programmes being implemented in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV): (a) Government have already formulated a National Forestry Action Programme which includes programme for improving forestry productivity through rehabilitation of degraded forests, research and technology development, assisting private initiatives with community participation and reduction of demand on forests by efficient utilisation of fuelwood and extensive bio-mass plantations.

(b) and (c) The use of forests for various purposes including fuel, fodder and grazing beyond the carrying capacity and encroachments are the main cause of forest depletion.

(d) and (e) The Tenth Five Year Plan envisages to increase the forest and tree cover to 25% by 2007 and 33% by 2012. The Ministry of Environment and Forests have already introduced the scheme of National Afforestation programme as a 100% Centrally Sponsored Scheme. Besides, plantation activity is also undertaken by the State Government under their State schemes/other schemes.

Applications pending with RCCF

1756. SHRI S.M. LAL JAN BASHA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that needs of tribals are not being efficiently met by the RCCF's office;

(b) the number of applications pending with Bangalore RCCF with regard to tribals;

(c) whether the office will energize itself and settle such issues;

(d) what steps are proposed by Government to monitor all offices of Regional Chief Conservator of forests;

(e) whether they will be made more accountable for their actions or in-action; and

(f) if so, the details of steps proposed to improve such offices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV): (a) to (f) No Sir. Under the provisions of Forest (Conservation) Act 1980, Regional Chief Conservator of Forests have been delegated power to approve proposals involving diversion of forest land up to 5 hectares, except mining and regularization of encroachment, and process the proposals involving diversion of forest land up to 40 hectares in consultation with State Advisory Group. There is no provision under Forest (Conservation) Act 1980 for dealing proposals in respect of tribals and non-tribals, differently; however, no proposal, submitted by State Governments for diversion of forest land to meet specific needs of tribal, is pending with Regional Office, Bangalore. For taking decision on proposals, State Governments are required to furnish complete information. Rules and Guidelines have been framed under Forest (Conservation) Act 1980 to dispose applications within specific time limit, and regional Offices have been directed to take action accordingly; however, Ministry reviews the performance of the Regional Offices from time to time.

Cutting of trees for commercial use

1757. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE:
SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:
PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that about 2000 trees are proposed to be uprooted from a well-laid park in Nehru Place, New Delhi to build up a huge commercial area;